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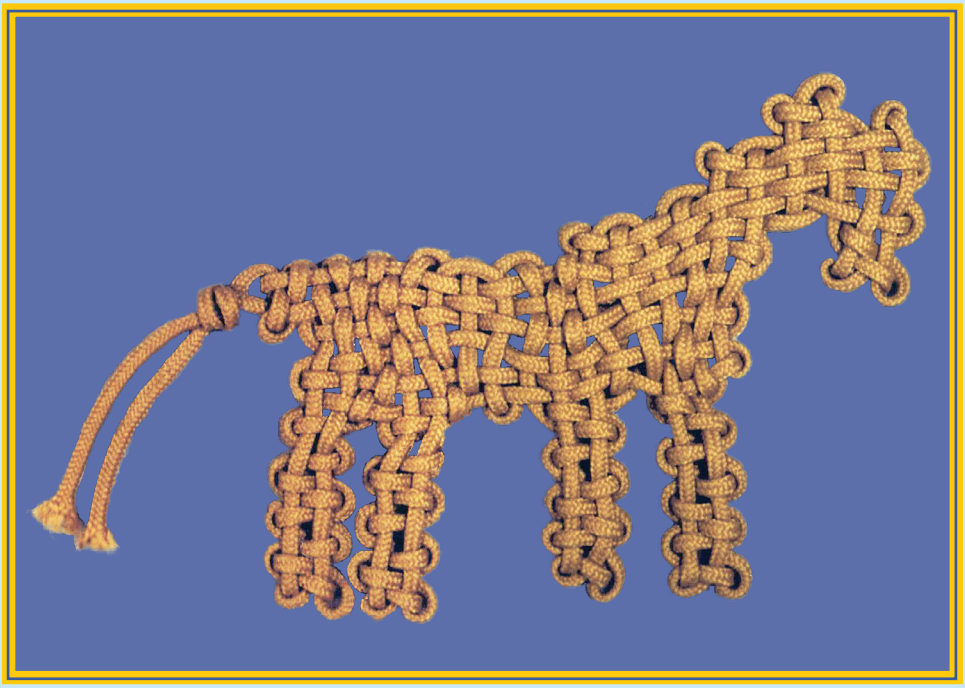
KNOTTING MATTERS

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers



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KNOTTING MATTERS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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The editors welcome the submission of letters, articles, photographs and sketches for publication. Correspondence may be by e-mail knottingmatters@igkt.net but more extensive items, such as articles for publication, as well as any pictures, which should be of good quality need to be sent as attachments. All submissions must include their author's name and e-mail or postal address.

If events are to be publicised in *Knotting Matters*, note the months of publication - March, June, September and December. Although the deadline for the next issue is given at the foot of the Contents page, please note that the editors begin putting it together at least three weeks earlier.

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KNOTTING MATTERS

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Pull-out - A bracelet of Trumpet Sinnet

PLEASE NOTE: LETTERS & ARTICLES FOR THE MARCH 2019 *KNOTTING MATTERS* MUST BE RECEIVED BY 9th FEBRUARY

FRONT COVER: PAN CHANG HORSE, EUROPA CHANG-DAWSON

EDITORIAL

Hello again and welcome to the latest issue of *Knotting Matters*.

While I am quite happy to write stuff for the magazine, it has been a while since I have got fired up enough about something to get into Grumpy Old Man (GOM) mode and put pen to paper. As time went by it also looked as if my grumbling and research would be needed to fill the pages and yet as I write this, about the only free space left, having removed my GOM pieces, is this editorial page! Some longish letters, a series of different opinion pieces, two meetings with pictures, follow-ons to series, three obituaries (sadly) and, hallelujah, a branch report, have all meant that we will go to the printers with a couple of pieces in hand, for the spring edition.

This of course does not mean that you are off the hook! You will see that there is a plea from the Guild for members to volunteer to help keep the wheels turning and one of the cogs is, of course, *KM*.

It has been interesting to read the inscriptions that Ashley wrote in *ABOK* and it would be great if anyone owns, or knows of, other copies. It also begs the question of how much time and effort he put into finding the different quotes he used. Can anyone shed further light?

Another attraction to this editing lark is that what you read in the pages is far from the whole picture. Over the past three months I have found myself searching for and through *KnotNews* and *Het Knoopenknauwertje* - NAB and Dutch-speaking publications about knotting – as well as back numbers of *KM*. All of this leads me to the conclusion that there is so much interesting knotting information out there which is either unknown to many, or difficult to source. Even our own past issues are not very well indexed and so there is a real risk that we are writing about subjects that have already been studied, rather than building on them.

As usual we hope that you will enjoy your read and possibly even be moved to respond to it, or add to the topics we will be able to include in the March 2019 issue.

Maurice.

There is just enough room left for the three of us to wish you all the best for the Christmas Season and Knotting Nirvana for 2019.

David, Gordon and Maurice.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Maurice

An examination of this series of knots which commences with superposed hitches reveals some interesting characteristics. Starting with the three-hitch knot known as the Masthead Knot, we see that the initial tuck is a right-under-left. Adding a hitch, we see that the initial tuck must be a right-over-left. So for an odd number of hitches we get the Masthead Knot type, and for an even number of hitches, we get a Sheepshank type of knot.

The picture shows knots in increasing numbers of hitches from three (at the top) to seven (at the bottom). Knots 1, 3 and 5 are Masthead Knot types and knots 2 and 4 are Sheepshank type knots.

Beyond eight hitches, tying becomes cumbersome and the knots less attractive.

John Heselton

Dear Maurice,

I live in Gosport, and one day, earlier this year, I took the bus to Fareham and between "The Glenco" and "Windsor Castle" pubs, a lady got on with her hair done in an Ocean Plat, or similar. I could not study it as I sit at the front of the bus, she sat at the back. I know that she had it pinned in place. Well I did what I had to do and got on the bus to go home and, b***** me, she got on the bus as well. I have lived in Gosport twenty-odd years and have not seen her before or since, but I now walk around with a camera in my pocket and I will approach her. Blow what she thinks of me. I am in the Solent Branch and I did ask if anyone knew her. No joy. I have been retired for twenty years, before that I had twenty years on the post office cable ships, and we used what looked like the Kellems cable grips in *KM* 140 when we did cable repairs. I did not know that they had a name. We just called them "stockings". We used to put a whammy, a strand taken from an 8ft length of old rope, to hold the cable in the stocking until it took the strain.

Considering the sizes of phone cables, deep water ones were made of all plastic, while coastal water ones had armouring wire - the fishing boats hit them a lot and broke them. The stockings were all sizes to fit them.

They were playing with fibre optics when I left.

Pete Wright

PS Had I not been at sea at that time, I would most likely have been on the Discovery when the Guild was formed. I do not know how long I was in the Guild the first time, then I left and re-joined much later.

Dear Maurice

We attended the half-yearly meeting in Stourport-on-Severn in October, and what a brilliant weekend it was. Full marks to Richard Hopkins for finding such a lovely venue.

There was the usual mixture of old faithfuls plus a few members for whom this was their first meeting, and the opportunity to see other members' work. The most enjoyable part of the weekend was the friendliness and comradeship between all nationalities.

The most disappointing aspect was the low number of attendees. Not counting day-visitors, there were fewer than 40. Five of these were Australians who had not attended any meetings before. Six were from Europe, all of them regular visitors. The rest were British.

We have always counted ourselves very fortunate that so many meetings are in the UK and therefore accessible to us, giving us the opportunity to meet so many talented and interesting knot-tyers. It would be lovely if more members would attend the meetings and see for themselves the benefit of actually being with other knot-tyers, whose work and talents can be so different from their own. We have never yet met a member who, attending a meeting for the first time, has not been delighted and inspired by all there was to see and talk about. If you have never met up personally with other knot-tyers, whatever your knotting interests and talents, why not try one of the AGMs or Half-Yearly meetings, it is bound to enhance your enjoyment of the Guild. Give it a go!

David and Sheila Pearson Yorkshire

Dear Maurice

I have found another book to add to the Spanish bibliography that I sent you. It is as follows: Fontecha, Francisco Fernández, *Cartilla marítima* ó *Manual de construcción y maniobras de los buques de vela*, La Revista Médica, 1876.

Many thanks

Luis Gilperez Fraile

Dear Maurice,

Things you don't see any more and things you never want to see! Rat frustraters for rodents on mooring lines and a mess on a bollard: wait 'till the marina monitor sees this! Plus about 200ft of recovered ex-fishingboat line, found in an awful tangled mess, badly rusted thimbles, and 0.5m of tangled, knotted frayed end. It's now much tidied up, with a re-spliced eye finished with a wall and crown for good measure. A bit stretched and very hard, as might be expected, not much use really, but might lend itself to eg an Ocean Plat. *What would you do with it?* Remotely possible suggestions only please!

W Kerr

Dear Maurice,

Knot just a joke.

Guild members who attended the autumn meeting in Stourport on Severn were amused to see that on Saturday October 6th *The Times* featured a series of drawings by the renowned award-winning cartoonist, Peter Brookes, depicting Vladimir Putin in trouble after tying his shoelaces together. Some of us were subsequently delighted when the letter commenting on this appropriate coincidence was published in *The Times* on Tuesday October 9th in the coveted bottom right-hand corner of the Letters page (see right). Hopefully this will have brought the existence of the Guild to the notice of some of the general public and may even have resulted in the recruitment of new members.

Knotty intelligence

Sir, How often does any of us think about knots when we tie our shoelaces? Peter Brookes's cartoon on Saturday (Oct 6) could not have been more appropriate as it coincided with the autumn meeting in Stourport-on-Severn of the International Guild of Knot Tyers. Having spent the day exchanging ideas and expertise, our members were pleased to note that they had something of practical importance to teach Putin.

DAVID BODGER
International Guild of Knot Tyers

To misquote an old English proverb: Knotting Ventured, Knotting Gained.

Penny Bodger

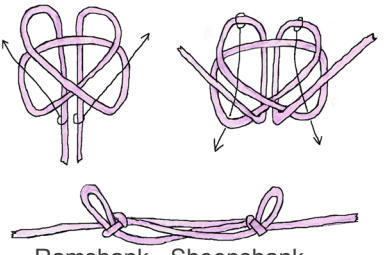
6

Dear Maurice,

Ramshanks v Sheepshanks.

A basic sheepshank tied on a single bight is one of the most easily recognised knots, although its origin is still unknown and its uses limited.

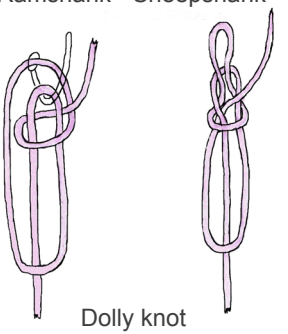
Did it just acquire its name for securing hanks of wool? Its prominent use was in the navy. Why would they name it after a farm animal? A more appropriate name would be a Shipshank. Its main use in the navy was for rope shortening and for protecting a damaged rope until it could be repaired with a splice. It was used in the American navy for hanging at sea *ABOK* page 59.[1] The main downfall of the Sheepshank is that if one end fails, the knot collapses. But for many years the Half-Sheepshank has been used as a Dolly knot. The Dolly knot was probably tied more often in a working environment than a full Sheepshank.



To overcome the Sheepshank's weakness, I came up with Ramshanks 1 and 2. Sent to *KM* in 1991 and they were in *KM* 54.

To tie Ramshank 1, double a bight over twice, straighten the two legs and place them over their corresponding loops.

Put the two loops through the bottom loops, hold them with your thumbs and pull the knot and standing parts in opposite directions.



1. In Ashley's version the spigot would hit the pulley block. If the victim was hauled aloft 10 ft and fell back 6 ft the spigot would be on the wrong side of the pulley. I believe that the rope would be over two pulleys, one on the yardarm and one on the forecastle. Between the two pulleys would be a perfectly constructed sheepshank twenty inches in length to give a 6 ft drop. A normal hitch at one end and a loop secured with thin twine. At the other end a spigot would be tied with a marlin spike hitch *ABOK* #2030 in the running rope just at the back of the secured loop. When the victim was hauled aloft by members of the ships crew, the carefully constructed sheepshank would collapse when it hit the forecastle pulley block ten feet away. The spigot would hit it at the same time stopping any further rope being pulled through. The victim would fall back down the required distance. Too little and he would die from strangulation, too much, decapitation. There was little room for error, it depended on the knotting skill of the boatswain. In the British navy hanging at sea was more basic. The victim was hauled aloft by a number of the ships crew and the rope tied off. The victim died from strangulation. The body was left to hang for four hours as a deterrent to the ships crew. This ceased in 1860.

If you untie one half of the Ramshank, the knot will hold fast unlike other Sheepshanks. The Ramshank can be tied one end at a time with just one knot which makes a satisfactory dolly knot unlike the vast majority of Sheepshanks.

Ramshank 2 can also be tied with the bottom loops going through the top loops. It makes a good Sheepshank-type knot that fails the one-knot test. Sometimes in knotting, less is more.

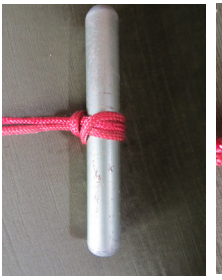
Owen K Nuttall

Editors' Note: Can anyone shed light on the origin of the word 'sheepshank'?

Dear Maurice,

For most of my working life, I was a veterinary surgeon in large animal practice (farm animals and horses).

There was a regular need to assist the birth of a calf (and occasionally a foal) by traction. In most cases, an eye splice in three soft, braided cords allowed the calf's head and each of its forelegs to be secured by simple nooses. The long free end of each cord needed to be attached to a short stick of some sort to provide a handle for the puller, I used aluminium relay batons. The attachment needed to be secure, rapidly and simply tied, resistant to jamming and easily released. Of course plenty of knots would have served the purpose with varying degrees of utility, but for the sake of speed I just used a couple of turns and a twist and gripped the "knot" as I pulled. Useless, because when I needed to let the handle go mid-delivery for some reason, the cord often detached itself and had to be re-attached. Silly me. If only I'd known about the Pile Hitch, *ABOK* #1815.



The Pile Hitch would have filled the bill perfectly in every respect (see photos). It would even have allowed for another body behind me to be attached to the same cord, if necessary. I failed miserably to teach my colleagues various knots useful to a vet, but I think they might actually have allowed the Pile Hitch a place in their limited repertoire, had I known it, .

Later in my career, traction devices with ratchet mechanisms were devised to do some of the pulling and they certainly had a useful, though slightly different, part to play, but using them was never quite as satisfying as manpower alone.

David Pepper

(At scouts we were taught the Marlinspike Hitch - Editor-in-Chief)

Dear Maurice,

This letter is in response to Cazbil's in *KM* 140 wherein he confesses to the sudden dawning of his puzzlement. Indeed, Cazbil credited this dawning to my letter in *KM* 139 and my use of the name "part" for a part of a Turk's-head and that that name was not what he had thought that part was called stating that "according to *ABOK* a Turks Head comprises leads and bights". Quite right, but *ABOK* also includes the apostrophe in Turk's-head". Oh dear! Now I am puzzled! But, thanks Cazbil, I accept credit for the dawning of your puzzlement but I think you do yourself a disservice. You are, after all, a regular in *Knotting Matters* and a source of puzzlement in your own right.

In defence of my "parts" however, I cite Bruce Grant's *Encyclopaedia of Rawhide and Leather Braiding* (1972) as an early, and perhaps knot undue, influence. But, to be fair, I did a comprehensive search of my limited library and believe I have identified where the surprising dichotomy on this important issue originates. It does appear to me to be connected with the historical association of "Boys and their Toys". Simply put, my thesis is that "Boys on Boats tended to be Leaders" but "Boys on Horses preferred to Party". I would be interested in hearing members' opinions on this theory.

Nevertheless, on the matter of Antipodean wonder (and it is), your supposition that *"if you live within spitting distance of the Black Stump you can call things whatever you please"* is however, remarkably perceptive. The truth is that any location on this "*wide brown land down under*" that has enough moisture available to enable you to raise a spit, is at quite a premium and it has been noted that the lucky locals there do tend to see themselves as somewhat entitled and have been known to call things whatever they please. Interestingly, it has recently been suggested that this localised entitlement syndrome along with the curious practice of "spitting at Black Stumps" is a unique and localised example of "costly signalling" behaviour inherited from our British forebears.

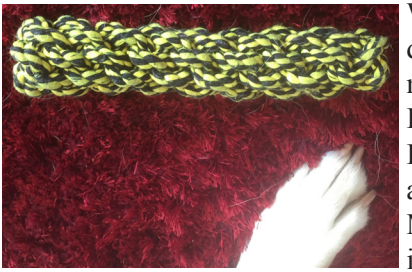
That being said Cazbil, I do take your generalised point and, for my 'part', I would be delighted to take your 'lead' and defer to *ABOK* on all matters knotting. It would indeed seem sensible, and I could think of no better tribute to the monumental contribution of Clifford W Ashley, than for the IGKT to formally endorse *ABOK* as the standard source of knots and, in the spirit of this proposal, I have included the apostrophe in Turk's-head. On the matter of "Parts v Leads" however, I suspect the frayed knot has unravelled, the cat is out of the bag and the horse has bolted. Anyway and after all, a rose by any other name will still have its thorns and as long as "wend" meets "send" at the end, no-worries mate, she'll be right. Right?

Jim Caswell Gold Coast, Queensland

Dear Maurice,

Dog owners, and possibly cat owners too, might have noticed the plethora of rope toys available for the interest and amusement of their pets and the entertainment of their human companions. The thing is, how are they made so inexpensively? Are they machine-made, are there rows of dexterous youngsters or little old ladies, (you never hear about serried ranks of "little old men" do you, I wonder why?) beavering away. The expression "beavering away" might be a mystery to people in a land devoid of these industrious little animals, no idea what they would say elsewhere, platypusing away, perhaps!

The toys range from a simple bit of rope with a knot in each end, or a Monkeys Fist, to a neat sinnet with the ends discreetly disposed of. The latter has an interesting spiral form which I know quite well because a long time ago I made one as a key ring with a spare bit of string. When I'd finished it, I didn't like it, put it away and forgot all about it, including how to make it! Don't you just hate that?



When, later, I decided I did like it, and tried to make a bigger one, could I remember how to do it? I even phoned the fount of all knotting knowledge, Mr Pawson, and after an interesting conversation, I had a better grip on its construction and made another. You try to discuss a thing like that over the phone, it's not easy. It says a lot about Mr P that he was prepared to spend the time and was also able to shed a great deal of light on the matter! It would have been fun to hear what an eavesdropper on that conversation would have made of it!

Hopefully someone will come up with some answers to my query, someone who works for an importer possibly or a retailer, or even someone who actually spends all day making them! You know who you are, as they say! Slide over to your pc and put fingers to keys and tell all. No need to take my word that these toys exist, go into a pet shop and look for yourself, they will let you in, even if you don't have a pet, no questions asked!

N King

Dear Maurice,

I'm grateful for Des's fond memory of Sten Johannson in *KM* 139. I wrote to Sten years ago about his amusing December 2003 article, "How a Guitar String Became a Heaving Line!" *KM* 81, in which he exposed some of the almost comical mistakes and invention that afflict much of knotting literature. That got my attention, as I faced similar illusions and nonsense arising from (so far as I've discovered) the most curious entanglement shown in Tyrrel Biddle's knot book, which Geoffrey Budworth questioned in his article "Wot Knot?" *KM* 82. Somehow, that peculiar image became an ersatz ingredient in knotting literature that spawned many similar copies. I've been finding them in many places posing as worthwhile knots, with some history!

Thanks to Sten's discovery of H N G Bushby's magnificent manuscript, *Notes on Knots*, from 1902, we now have a better insight into the knot-world at the turn of that century. It was at the IGKT-NAB conference in 2003, held at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia (USA), that I got to see this rarest of knot works. I'd been alerted to it by the writings of Pieter van de Griend, who had also had some brief time with it, all the way from The Netherlands! Bushby had a keen mind, and a beautiful illustrating hand and lovely, but not so easily readable, writing! Notably, Bushby was the first known person to have illustrated Ashley's Constrictor Knot, following Bowling's cryptic words about an altered Clove Hitch. Oddly, Bushby makes no comment on it.

As to the Wot Knot? - I'll borrow Geoffrey Budworth's good name for it – it appears in Bushby's *Notes* (v5:224ff / Vol5:248f).[1] Compared to Biddle's version, Bushby's differs in three crossings; his source is a mysterious "H" whose identity remains to be discovered. It might be P L Haslope's work *Knots and Knotting*, known only from the cover page of his book *Practical Sea Fishing* proclaiming his authorship of it and another work. Bushby once cites merely "Haslope (1901)".

Why are the facts about knots in such a confused state? Des Pawson's article "A History of Knot Tying Works" *KM* 138 exposes a dubious history of the western world's supposed knotting record. Just consider what is regarded as the knot tyer's bible, *The Ashley Book of Knots*.

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1. Editors' Note: Dan Lehman's page number references are based on the original Bushby manuscripts which are available on line. However, we have added the page references based on Bushby's *Notes on Knots* published in hard copy by the Guild, and also available on the IGKT website to be viewed or downloaded as a PDF, by members only, as we consider these to be more easily accessible.

Des's article shows many different covers for this major knot work, each of which carries some variation of the publishers' nonsense claim about the book having "Uber 3.800 Knotten", "3.900 nudos", "3800 noueds", "over 3900 knots", or maybe exactly "3854 Nodi". Why the variation? Are these numbers quoted, perhaps, at the current international exchange rates for knots? They are all simplistic exaggerations based on Ashley's image numbers (#) which do indeed reach exactly 3,854.

But anyone concerned with accuracy should quickly see that many numbered images are not of knots, and many knots have multiple image numbers (eg see the Index listing for 'Clove Hitch'). The actual number of knots is more accurately a third of the total quoted, and less if only practical knotting is included. What many regard as the world's most authoritative body on knotting should have an answer!

With Sten and Bushby in mind, I take issue with Des's assertion that it would be "a brave man who questions the written word" which, as Des continues, is so much "quoted and copied over and over again" in the knotting world. Aren't authors to know what they write about?

In this regard, Bushby, even in the early 1900s, had some interesting observations, eg "Other nautical writers, who have copied Burney, or some common authority, are open to the same criticism; and none of them, Burney not excepted, appears to understand the process they endeavour to describe. The figures in Burney and Bushell are hopelessly wrong." (v3:238 / Vol3:209).[1] Also, "the method ... given is that of Steel (1794), and, judging from the abominable diagrams, of Kipping (1856), Bushell (1893), also of Haslope (1901)" (v2:168 / Vol2:155).[1] And regarding the Wot Knot, he had the wit to challenge it: "The knot is a tangled mess ... nameless bungle" rather than presenting it as though it had some past and future merit, as some others have done. So, it should not be a brave person, but *any* person who seeks understanding. The questions can be tough to answer, but they need to be asked.

Since I've mentioned Biddle's book, I should note that the Book Review, *KM* 139 of this small work, also cited in Des's article, contains some confused facts as well. The best evidence is that the book was published in about 1879, and it does contain the bowline, contrary to the reviewer's assertion, along with the double and running variations. As for publishers Norie and Wilson, their move to Minories is put at 1878/9 by two of the publisher's own histories, not around 1882.

Cheers,
Dan Lehman
Falls Church City, Virginia, USA

Proposed IGKT meeting in Australia in 2019

It has been proposed to hold a meeting in Australia in 2019 under the IGKT banner, underwritten & organised by Andromeda Industries Pty Ltd

Sat 6th and Sun 7th July 2019 at
West Tamworth League Club, 58 Phillip St,
West Tamworth NSW Australia 2340

Phone: 02 6765 7588

Australian and International members are invited to come and display their work over two days. Dinner on Saturday night.
Demonstrations of work will be highly desirable.

Cost recovery contribution from members about A$100 each

Please register your interest at igktaus@gmail.com
Raymond McLaren IGKT member 96080

IGKT AGM 2019

IGKT Dorset Branch invites you to the 2019 AGM

'Jurassic 19'

at the Nothe Fort in Weymouth, Dorset UK

9th-12th May 2019

Weymouth is a Georgian town in the centre of the Jurassic Coast region of Dorset & East Devon UK

FURTHER DETAILS CAN BE FOUND IN THE

ENCLOSED APPLICATION FORM

AN INFORMATION SECTION WILL BE OPENED SHORTLY ON THE IGKT WEBSITE WHICH WILL BE UPDATED WITH FULL DETAILS IN THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO THE EVENT

IGKT Solent Branch has a Busy Year

by Chris Jenkins

The Solent Branch has had a busy and varied year of events. Apart from the usual branch meetings every couple of months we took part in various activities that brought knotting to a diverse range of groups.

1st January found us in the Barley Mow pub at a table in the corner showing knots to interested people, while the rest of the customers listened to the open mike sessions organised by Shep Wooley, as a charity event.

In the middle of February we gave a talk and demonstration to members of the Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club, then at the end of the month and at the start of March we led a couple of sessions teaching two packs of cubs how to make paracord bracelets.

At the end of March we visited the cathedral cloisters to give instruction to the Winchester Cathedral bellringers on splicing bell ropes. Weekends at the end of April and the beginning of May found a group sharing an old workshop with wood-turners, felt-makers and glass artists as part of the Emsworth Art Trail.

In May, Ken Yalden was the resident knot tyer at a wedding reception. July and August included the usual Fareham Model Engineers week-end and the Gilbert White Georgian week-end, respectively, as well as the Weymouth seafood festival, then the end of August brought the Emsworth flower show.

At the start of September we were in the museum of HMS Excellent for the Heritage Open Days, and in the middle of the month we had glorious weather at St Hubert's church for their fund raising art event. Summer week-ends also found members taking part in the Hampshire Open Studios.

Each event brought a crowd which ranged from young people keen to learn, through the mildly curious and intrigued, to those with particular queries and wanting to have long conversations - all of it making for a pleasurable way of bringing knotting to anyone interested, which is, after all, the the Guild's aim.

Tricolour, tridimensional triaxial musings

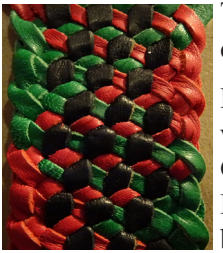
by Maurice McPartlan

Having tried to explore some of the variations available for two-coloured flat triaxial plaits in *KM* 140, I started playing with three colours and quickly realised that the computations increase more or less exponentially as the number of colours increases and so I am going to have to limit the exploration to a few combinations in the hope that others will try to expand the palette of triaxial combinations. Most of my experiments have been with three colours though I will finish by trying six

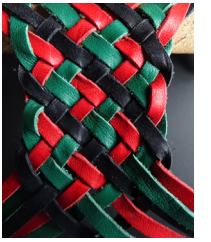
There are some happy surprises in there… so here goes.

Starting with three colours:

The classical three-colour pattern in triaxial plaiting is the three-dimensional-looking building blocks, which is started with one colour in the left hand and one in the right. This works in three dimensional triaxial, because the two colours spiral in opposite directions. In a flat plait, the colours move from one side to the other creating patches of solid and mixed colours R,R,R,R,R,R:G,G,G,G,G,G.



The verticals are all a third colour, in my case Black (on left) so nothing really striking..



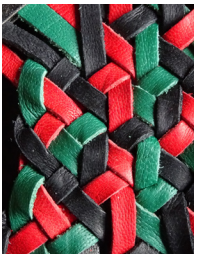
Moving back to the star-based patterns, I went for the following: Green, Red, Black, Green, Red, Black: Black, Red, Green, Black, Red, Green which henceforth will be noted as: GRBGRB:BRGBRG, which plaited gives:

(For what follows I will only show the triaxial result and not the first plait)

Inserting BGRB down the centre gives “red and green” stars split diagonally from North East to South West.

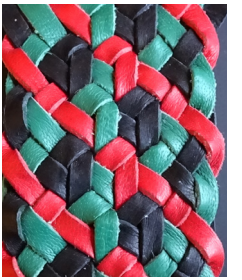
SPOILER ALERT! Magic moment coming:

If we remove the Green and Red vertical strands and swap them so that the verticals are now BRGB, then the result is a Red and Green star but with the colours split vertically!



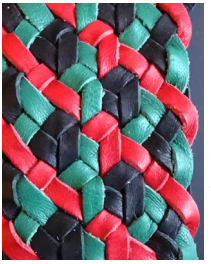
Incorporating these two possibilities into one plait, I moved to a plait made of 2 sets of nine-strands: Bl,Br,R,Bl,Br,R,Bl, Br,R:RBr,Bl,… with verticals Bl,Br,R,Bl,R,Br,Bl,Br,R,Bl to incorporate a line of vertically split stars between two sets of diagonally-split stars.

With BGRBGR:RGBRGB and with verticals BGRB we obtain a Black and Red star with a green flash or Black hexagons with RRG hexagons.



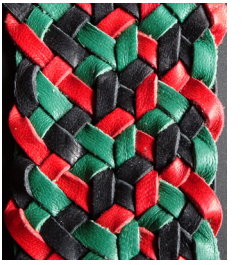
If we swap the Red and Green verticals we end up with Green hexagons and a Red and Green star with a Black flash.

Here it is important to note that the leftmost vertical – B goes under SbDbSr and then the G goes under SgDrSb and the R under SrDgSg.



One other aspect of variations that I had not previously considered was the horizontal displacement of the vertical colours and so the following image is of the BGRBGR RGBRGB start with the BGRB sequence of verticals, however the verticals are displaced one “S” to the right so that B is under SgDrSb, G is under SrDgSg and R is under SbDbSr. The dominant pattern are the black “hexagons” (on left).

Two “S”s to the right so that B is under SrDgSg, G is under SbDbSr and R is under SgDrSb, producing a Green and Black star split on the diagonal (on right).



As you can see the possibilites are more or less limitless. Please let us know if you discover more magic moments.

So, on to six colours! Now, in my travels I met a mathematician and asked how many combinations of patterns I could have if my left-, right-hand and vertical strands each contained six colours. It turns out to be $(6!)^3 = 373,248,000$. If I keep the six colours in the vertical strands but allow the left- and right-hand strands to be pairs of colours then we have $(6!)^2 = 518,400$. If we allow the colours to be grouped by threes, then we have $6! = 720$ combinations. **I am quite happy if the mathematically minded wish to challenge this, as long as they can explain their reasoning in terms that we can understand!**

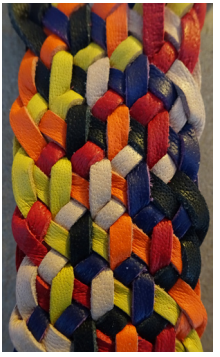
Here are the base-line plaits for the three possibilities mentioned above:

Purple, Yellow, Black, Orange, White, Red, or P,Y,B,O,W,R, with paired colours – I chose the following sequence: PP,YY,BB, OO,WW,RR or start with groupings of three strands of the same colour PPP,YYY,BBB,OOO.

Then with verticals added

P,R,W,O,B,Y,

Y,B,W,O,P,R

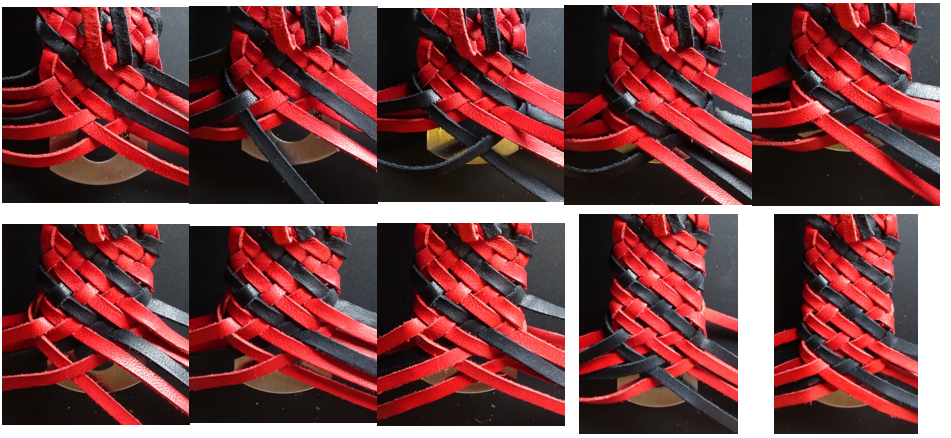


R,R,R,W,W,W :

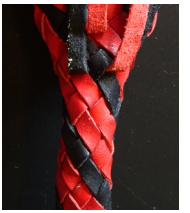
One conclusion that I have been coming to, is that using triaxial braiding for narrow pieces: belts, bracelets, lanyards and such, simpler seems to work better whereas in areas such as quilting, where the finished piece can be as wide as it is long, more complex patterns can be entertained.

Passing from flat to round triaxial plaiting. The first requirement is that the pattern be one that works both in flat and round plaiting – so the brick pattern will not translate well. I have also found that the system works best if I plait in the round in multiples of the number of strands in each side of the plait. So if plaiting six strands in either hand then I would plait six, twelve or eighteen strands per hand before returning to flat.

In the following sequence, I have placed the plait on a ruler in order to be able to hold it stable and photograph it while plaiting.



Removing the ruler and tightening the strands we obtain something like the image to the right.



I later started a braid in the round, but didn't insert any verticals. Then I went to flat where I did start the verticals. When I reached the required length, I returned to the round braid, using the original round as a core for the second one. I also followed the verticals through, did some tidying up, added a Turks Head for some added interest and trimmed the ends.

Hey presto! A hat band.

Playing with Des's Cat

by Mac Mackenzie

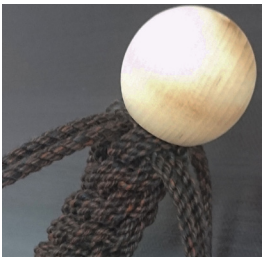
I have only recently taken to working with hard-laid cord. My previous knotting work has been mainly with synthetic stuff of one sort or another. As my first project I thought it might be nice to make a cat-o'-nine tails. The seed for this idea was planted when, as I stood in front of leg irons on a tour of HMS Victory over 40 years ago, I heard tale of drunken sailors not only being punished, but also having to make the cat-o'-nine tails that they were to be punished with. I'm not sure of the truth behind this but it always stuck in my head. I always wanted to make one myself, but never got around to it. Luckily, I had recently purchased a copy of Des Pawson's *Knot Craft & Rope Mats* in which he gives an excellent set of instructions for making his version of a cat. It is with his very kind permission that I give here a little insight into the project, and my own angle on it.

Starting out with nine 2.5m lengths of 4mm cord, I made a 9-strand Matthew Walker knot about 900mm up, to bring the strands together. Once completed, Des suggests a short length of alternating 4x4 crown sinnet around the ninth strand which acts as a core. I kept getting confused, so I found that a good method for keeping track of which strands were passive and which were being worked on each crown, was to put a small clip on each of the four 'idle' stands then move the clips to the other four strands after completing each layer. Once the alternating 4x4 crowning was in place (about 70mm) it was time to put in a diamond knot. Crown, then wall, then double, to bring the strands back into the centre. This then needed to be drawn together snugly.

The next part of the handle not only has the 9th strand continuing as the core, but also includes the insertion of a 130mm piece of 4mm stainless steel wire. The previous diamond was made nice and tight while this piece of wire was pushed firmly into its centre. For the whole length of the wire some paired crowning was applied, four pairs of strands crowned together.

Initially, I made the mistake of not starting this process tight enough on the first couple of crowns and was disappointed to find that I could still see the wire insert after I'd finished. It was a significant error which I had to rectify immediately. I stopped the paired crowning just short of the end of the wire and cut the ninth central strand just before finishing the crowning, to leave just the remaining eight strands.

The next job was to pop a wooden ball (with a shallow hole drilled in the end of it) onto the exposed end of wire. Once in position, I walled the eight strands at the base of the ball and followed with a fancy crown aka *ABOK* #954. Then, having upended the handle so that the ball was at the bottom, I gently pulled all stands down together to separate slightly the crown from the wall. Then, with each of the working ends moving directly over one and under one to the left, I extended the wall and crown into a globe knot of sorts. This was then tripled



(below the original wall) and tightened whilst losing the end to finish off. The last stage was to go back to the 'tails' and put in the blood knots. I must admit that, whilst probably the easiest part of the process, this was my favourite bit.

Des's cat-o'-nine tails is, in my opinion, extremely handsome when finished.

One of my pictures shows two of them exactly as per instructions in a spiral. I couldn't, however, stop myself from putting my own slant on it, so I decided to cover the paired crowning with a Turks Head. After a couple of failed (badly-sized) attempts, I settled on a 3-pass 23Lx8B with approximately 9m of 2mm cord.

It is so lovely to work with hard-laid cord for a TH, but a much more taxing game than working with synthetics. A slower but, for me, much more rewarding experience having to initially tie on a mandrel then slowly draw down to size once in position.

I've now got 'cat fever'. I've made four to date and am now setting my sights on some variations.

Please buy Des's book, not only for its beautiful diagrams and his full description of the process for each of the knots involved. But also because it gives many brilliant examples of how to implement and work into great projects many other everyday knots that you might already have under your belt, that are just waiting for an application.

I should also point out that the cord I used for all of the cats in my images was supplied by my local vendor Philip Le Masurier at htpps://bloodknot.bigcartel.com Philip custom-made the cord for me with a view to it resembling tarred hemp when in actual fact it is cotton based. I think he ended up getting pretty close to the mark.

Knotting Aids Economic Growth

by Colin Byfleet

The recent autumn meeting of the Guild at Stourport-on-Severn in the English Midlands was unusual in that 12% of the attendees had made the long journey from Australia's east coast. We were delighted to greet them at the end of their trek to the UK.

Amongst this august group was Raymond McLaren from Tamworth, NSW, a small town 400km (250miles) north of Sydney. Despite the limitations of air-travel, Raymond had brought a 10kg bag of his high-quality work to display and it attracted much admiration.

Raymond is the founder of a flourishing business, Andromeda Industries, in the nearby town of Moonbi (population about 1,000). Amongst other useful industrial materials, Andromeda make flexible, braided-steel cables and slings and have an enviable reputation for the strength and quality of their products.

Very modestly, he attributes some of his success to the world of knotting. He was introduced to plaiting and weaving by Chas L Spencer's book *Knots, Splices and Fancy Work* which he borrowed from the library in Newcastle, NSW, in 1957. He added his engineering skills and founded Andromeda. After its initial usefulness, the book was put to one side and forgotten about until rediscovered by Raymond in 2010, some 53 years overdue!

He contacted the library and, having apologised for keeping the book so long, asked about the overdue fine. He offered them A$5,000 (US$3,550, £2,775), which the library accepted with grateful thanks! Their normal maximum fine would be the price of the book! This donation attracted a good deal of media attention in many Australian newspapers and also TV coverage. A quick Google search for "*raymond mclaren library Newcastle*" brings up at least eight of these reports.

Raymond had to get back to Australia after the meeting to see his latest purchase – a 4,000 ton press from Sweden, for crimping the eye-ferrules on big cables.

Astronomy is among Raymond's other interests and he was largely responsible for the installation and refurbishment, in Tamworth, of a remarkable astro-camera, originally used for tracking missiles and satellites. One of several articles about this astro-camera can be found at: www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/4404765/city-claims-prized-piece-of-history/

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

If you have recently changed any of your contact details (post or e-mail), please send the updated information by e-mail to: membership@igkt.net
or by mail to: IGKT Membership Secretary,
15 Spey Close, Thornbury, Bristol, BS35 2NR, UK

THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE YOUR DETAILS ARE CHANGED

Knots and Ropework under Traditional Sail

by David Hall

Several years ago I was fortunate to be a crew member on the three-masted topsail schooner "Kathleen and May". I worked and sailed on her regularly for many weeks over a period of nearly ten years. During this time I probably covered most aspects associated with ropes, cordage and small stuff. What knowledge I already had about knots was supplemented by learning from others and those two informative publications *The Ashley Book of Knots,* and *The Rigger's Apprentice*.

In the earlier years during the ship's restoration, my task was sourcing the rope and cordage, some of it commissioned through Chatham dockyard, where I was privileged to be shown the whole rope-making procedure. A fascinating process that has changed little since Nelson's day.

The rope we used was Hempex, synthetic hemp which looks like hemp and handles in much the same manner, with the advantage that it is rot-proof. I would recommend a visit to Chatham dockyard to anyone with an interest in history, ships and ropes.

While on board, I also found out about the small stuff, Cod line and Marline. Cod line is strong hard-laid cord about 4-6mm in diameter used for anything from light halyards to seizing. A nice material for knot tyers and knot boards, as it makes a neat and tidy small-scale splice and gives a knotboard a vintage look.

We also used Marline, spun tarred natural flax, great stuff for whipping thicker ropes and seizing standing rigging.

In the beginning, I quite expected to have to acquaint myself with a whole variety of new knots but only a few of the common ones were all that were needed; unfortunately there was no call for me to rig a topsail halliard bend. Much of the time on board, the crew were working with heavy gauge rope, ranging in diameter from ½ in to 1½ in, mainly in conjunction with a block and tackle to hoist and lower sails.

There is always ongoing work just looking after the ropes. Worn or stretched rope has to be replaced with new; sail gaskets always seem to get lost and need to be replaced. This usually entails one end being whipped and the other probably having an eye spliced or fitted with a galvanised thimble. I was fortunate to have to make a large eye-splice in a mooring line with a long neat taper, a job that does not come round often.

There were numerous other tasks associated with rope and rigging that also came my way, like splicing and serving thimbles, essential where the end attachment would be made with a metal shackle.

On occasions, we also needed to replace the strops on pulley blocks and stitch thick leather hide round chafing points. I also remember being out on the bowsprit attaching cringles or sail hanks to the foresails, all part of traditional sailing life, and I was grateful to be involved in it.

Tying knots on board a sailing ship is a little different to doing it in the comfort of your own home or with an instructional group, in as much as, on board, a knot is tied for a particular working purpose. Generally knotwork on board a traditional ship falls into two categories, recreational or working knots. Recreational knots are made when off watch, for your own needs or satisfaction.

The crew might spend their spare time using their knotting skills on items of a personal nature. I have seen some very neat knife-lanyards, platted, braided and displaying crown and wall knot stoppers.

Many of us would finish a voyage sporting a ditty bag made from light canvas with a drawstring and interesting knot work. I have seen these bags with threads cut and drawn out of the canvas to make an attractive pattern, then reworked with light cordage.

I was quite pleased with a canvas rigger's bag I made in the form of a small bucket. This is a very useful piece of kit and was designed to hold a selection of tools, marlin spike, knife, pliers, and wire-cutters, as well as all the bits and pieces for whipping and sail repair. The tools were arranged to fit into pockets leaving the rest clear for other stuff.

One member of the crew made a very neat sailmakers needle–case, the outside worked with braided whipping twine.

On those occasions when visitors came on board, we might hold a knotting class that gave us the chance to encourage others to take an interest in this fascinating craft. "Whatever you do, do it well. Do it so well that when people see you do it, they will want to come back and see you do it again, and they will want to bring others and show them how well you do what you do." (Walter E Disney)

Scouts and Knots

by Richard Norman

I guess in most of our minds Scouting is synonymous with pioneering, ropes and everything knotting, so imagine my surprise when a Scout chum told me that these days "a Leader can get his/her Wood Badge (Wood Beads are the leaders' training award – two small wooden 'teeth' on a thin leather thong) without ever handling a rope or tying a knot". I argued that it was not possible but it made me go away and check, and I am sorry to say that it is correct!

I cannot speak for other than the UK (though I have lots of chums abroad and could check) whereas in the British Boy Scouts and Baden-Powell Scouts' Association it is compulsory that a Scout (even a Beaver and a Cub) learn a knot or knots, in the Scout Association (The SA – the largest UK association) it has become one of the options and thus an option for a SA Leader in training and something that can be avoided (not that I am saying they are avoided but not all scouts get all the Challenge Awards or all the Activity Badges.

I would say that it is rare that, other than for an admin role such as Group Scout Leader, District Commissioner, County Commissioner etc, that an SA leader would get their Wood Badge without touching a rope it is also only an option for them!

This is all the more surprising when you realise that the founder and only World Chief Scout Robert Stephenson Smyth 1st Baron Baden-Powell of Gilwell, OM, GCMG, GCVO, KCB, DL (or B-P as, thank heavens, we all refer to him) as he

devoted a large part of Chapter III in his book that started it all off 110 years ago in 1908, *Scouting for Boys*, "CAMP FIRE YARN No. 8 Pioneering - Knot Tying" with several mentions in other chapters and paragraphs!

We still learn the flat or square knot for First Aid (or Emergency Aid as we must call it these days) and that knot appears on the membership badge of the World Organization of the Scout Movement to this day (but not on that of the World Federation of Independent Scouts). The original Scouts used to tie the scarf and the patrol pennant to their staves, wear lanyards – though these have been a bought item for many years - and 'All-round cords'. Even the guys on the tents (which seem to be a throw-away item when requiring repair these days) it would seem that unless you are a Sea Scout or keen on mountain/rock climbing there is no compulsion for a scout to tie a knot.

I think that it is a generational thing, also driven by the wide number of activities that young people can do these days – and they cannot do it all. Scouters of my generation are passing on the mantle, if they are not passing on full stop, and many of the Scouts the generation or two below me have had little exposure to ropes and knots. I still teach full pioneering and of course all the knots, hitches and lashings used for it – including making a rope, anchors and easy billies etc and all of my Beavers, Cubs and Scouts will have done that, but also many leaders who have not been exposed to the art and skill cannot or will not be able to pass it on!

Ropes, knots and hitches are part of my DNA; hardly a day goes by when I do not use one. I often see people tying stuff onto their cars, vans or small lorries and making a mess so, as I have promised as a scout 'to help other people at all times', I happily help them tie a working knot which in its simplicity and function is beautiful – the Carter's or Trucker's Hitch or knot (which itself is under threat from tensioners) even the Clove Hitch or the Round Turn and Two Half Hitches! I can then untie the Reef Knot tied between the ends of my Scout Scarf as I have done my good turn for the day!

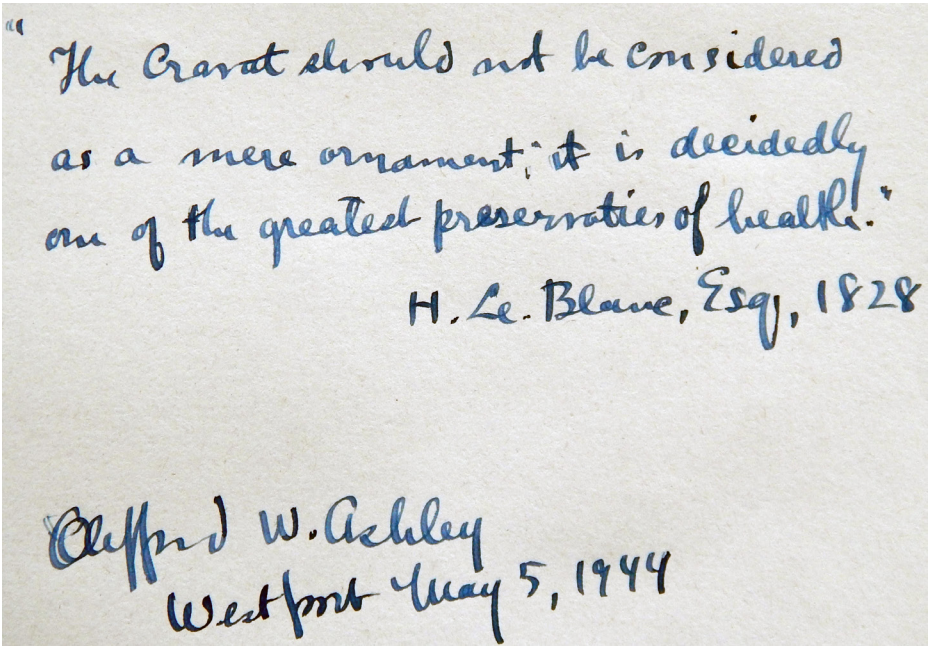
So colleagues shall we do something about it? If we each in our areas offer to do a knot programme for some Scout Districts and Groups, I am sure that there will be a take-up; maybe we can get a piece in the (now quarterly) magazine sent out to all leaders, and if someone could take on the referral of contacts from that to the IGKT members who are willing, then we may just stop the rot and start a revolution – smile.

We must try to keep it down to the basics – those are the most important skills! If they show interest or you have enthused them then maybe you will be invited back?

Some Ashley Inscriptions in *ABOK*

by Des Pawson MBE

At the AGM at South Molton in 2017 there was on display the inscribed and signed copy of *The Ashley Book of Knots* that the Guild bought a few years ago.

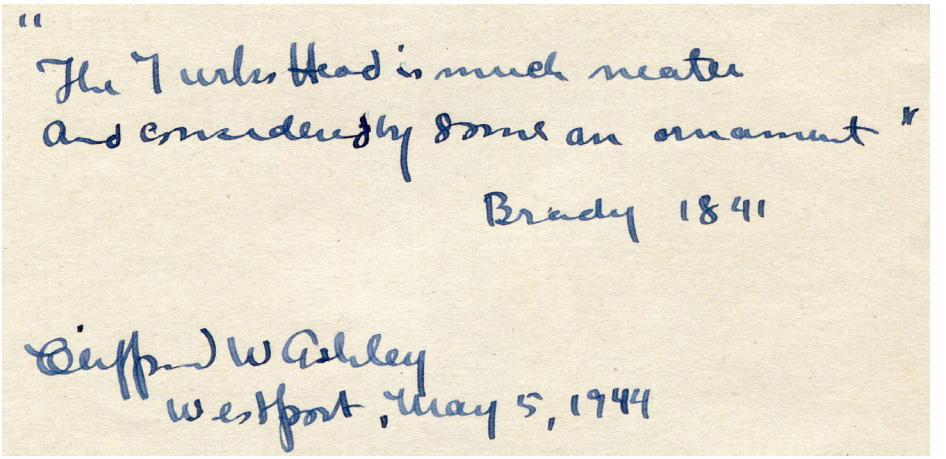

"The Cravat should not be considered
as a mere ornament; it is decidedly
one of the greatest preservatives of health."
H. Le Blanc, Esq, 1828
Clifford W. Ashley
Westport May 5, 1944

The inscription reads:

> "The Cravat should not be considered
> as a mere ornament; it is decidedly one of
> the greatest preservatives of health."
> H Le Blanc, Esq, 1828
> Clifford W. Ashley
> Westport May 5, 1944

Clifford Ashley must have been very busy that 5th May, 1944, for, over the years, I have collected the details of inscribed and signed editions and there are quite a few dated 5th May.

I suspect Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, his publishers, had just delivered the first batch of his book to his home in South Westport, not far From New Bedford. I imagine he sat down and inscribed a good number for friends and other important people. The following are those that I have details of, but I suspect that he did quite a few more that year. Sadly the following year he had a debilitating stroke and died in September 1947. So all of these inscribed and signed copies are very special. Ashley's inscription in one of my own copies is:



"The Turks Head is much neater
and considered by some an ornament"
Brady 1841

Clifford W. Ashley
Westport May 5, 1944

The following inscriptions appear in other copies:

"I'll give you this warning,
afore we belay,
Steer clear of Policemen,
you'll find it don't pay."
Old Shanty

Clifford W. Ashley
Westport May 5, 1944

"Instead of tying, Seamen
always say make fast"
Capt John Smith 1627.
Clifford W. Ashley
S. Westport May 5, 1944

"No one cares to leave the thread
of a story without tying a knot in it"
Howard Pyle
Clifford W. Ashley
Westport May 5, 1944

On the next day May 6th he was still at it:

"Here I have made the True Lovers Knott,
to try it in marriage was never my lott."
Stephen Blake
Clifford W. Ashley
So Westport May 5, 1944

I have seen other signed but not inscribed copies with the dates Aug 2nd 1944 and Sept 25th 1944.

The Mariners Museum Newport News, had supported Ashley by buying a number of his paintings, and a quantity of the print run appears with the extra detail of their logo and *Publication Number 13 The Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia.* The copy in their library is inscribed around the Half Title:

To The Mariners Museum

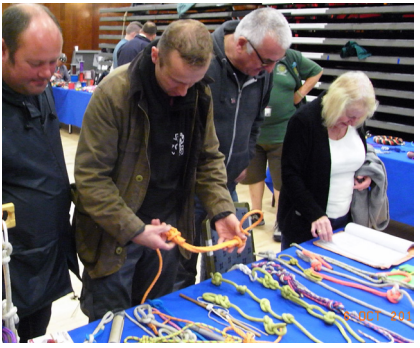
THE ASHLEY BOOK OF KNOTS
Clifford W. Ashley
Westport, Mass. 1944
"A Knot is a large knob formed
on the extremity of a rope."
William Falconer, 1769

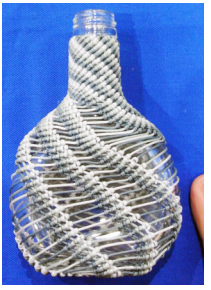
Interestingly, this is the only copy I have seen with the recipient's name in it.

For those of a bibliographic frame of mind, it is also worth pointing out that there was a special edition produced by Doubleday Doran with the date 1944 for the Columbian Rope Company, Auburn N.Y.

Autumn Meeting at Stourport on Severn

Although it was the first Autumn meeting held in the UK for several years, it was not the best attended, though congratulations to the Australians, Dutch and French who made it to middle England. However, there was a good atmosphere, a plentiful display of work with one or two innovations, and quite a few interested visitors from the locality, including several children who, as usual, were anxious to have a bash. Future members? We can but hope.





Travel Bug Update

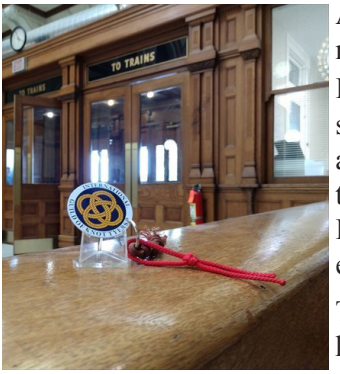
by Patrick Glisson

In the March 2018 *Knotting Matters* 138, Caroline Sandrey wrote a short article "What is geocaching?" As a geocacher myself, I was very interested that there were a number of "trackable tags" or, as I have always heard them called, Travel Bugs, available to the membership. I sent her a request and promptly received five in the mail, I was only hoping for two and was agreeably surprised. Since that time I have released two of them myself, activated a third one that I am moving from cache to cache, and the remaining two were handed to another Guild Geocacher at the Louisville meeting. When I requested them from Caroline I said I would try and keep the Guild posted on their progress, so I thought I would share an update.

Here are the current stats on the three I released;

IGKT-NAB Mark I – release 2nd April 2018 stated mission "I am the IGKT-NAB Mark I travel bug. My mission is to travel far and wide and return to the Louisville KY area in the fall of 2018 for the IGKT-NAB meeting in October. If all goes well I will then catch a hop to the 2019 meeting, location to be determined." As of 4 November 2018, Mark I has logged 1900+ miles with 28 different log entries.

IGKT-NAB Mark II – release 2nd April 2018 stated mission "I am the IGKT-NAB Mark II Travel Bug. I am being released in Louisville KY in the Spring of 2018. My mission is to reach my fellow knot tyers in the IGKT-PAB out west and come back to Louisville for the October 2018 knot tyers meeting." As of 4 November 2018 Mark II has logged 8000+ miles and 63 log entries.

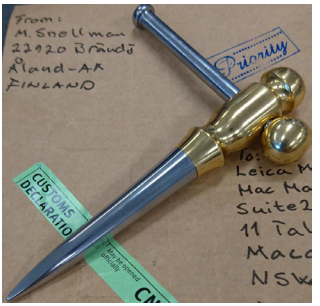


IGKT-North America – released 15th July 2018, stated mission "Please move me around and share any knotty events you can. Then send me back toward KY, Thanks". As of 4 November 2018 IGKT-NA has logged 3600+ miles and 15 log entries.

The remaining two are in the hands of an IGKT knotter in Indiana.

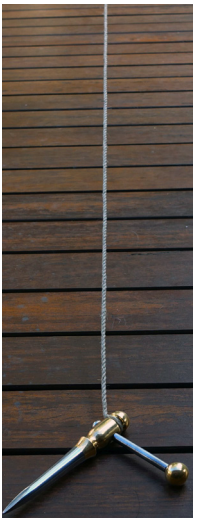
Mikko's Ropemaker Spike

by Mac Mackenzie



I've always fancied the idea of making my own rope and while it's probably not as professional as proper rope-making equipment, I thought I'd invest in one of Mikko Snellman's Ropemaker Spikes. I managed to source some fine natural hemp yarn from the US and set about my new spinning project. If you're not familiar with the process for this method, here's a brief explanation:

- First thing is to secure the end of your yarn to a fixed point, I used a hook at one end of our back decking.
- Then run the yarn back and forth between the tie-off point and another fixed point. I ended with 8 x 10m strands of yarn and tied off back at my starting point.
- Next unhook the further end of your yarns and hook over the ball-end of the spike on the ropemaker tool and into the groove.
- Gently taking up the slack on the cords, use the weight of the spike to start spinning / twisting the yarns clockwise, holding onto the little bar that runs through the spike.
- Spin, spin, spin until eventually the yarns gain tension. My 10m strands reduced in length to 9 and a bit metres. You know when the yarns are spun tight enough when you can relax the tension on the spike and the twisted yarns want to buckle back up onto themselves (like any cord does when you twist it too much).



The next stage can be tricky, as you need to implement some kind of technique to keep the spun yarns under tension while you first double, then triple them.

The easiest way is just to make sure that your starting length of yarns isn't any longer than a full hand to hand arm span, as the second stage of this process requires doubling/halving the yarns under tension.

I initially used an old extended golf ball grabber to act as an arm extension, it worked, but I still couldn't get enough length.

The solution was to find something that I could fix to with enough weight to keep the tension but was moveable. I used an old dumbbell on the ground with a hook tied to it. I kept it by my feet whilst spinning and then when ready (with the yarns still attached to the spike) I put the end of the spun yarns around the hook and started walking back to the initial tie off point.

The weight kept the line under tension as I walked to my first hook (still holding the spike) and dragged behind me as I progressed. Once back to the initial tie-off point, I put the yarns around the first hook and started walking back towards the weight. Once at the weight (the spun line now tripled) I unhooked the line from the weight and popped the looped end back over the ball end of my ropemaker spike. It's important to maintain the tension throughout this process.

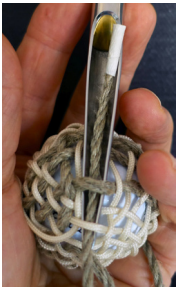
Next: Spin the tripled spun yarns anticlockwise until everything locks into place. Bingo! Rope made.

I managed to spin up (from two rounds of 8 x 10m strands) 2 x 2.8m lengths of cordage. I then formed a 176-strand globe-knot base with synthetic cord (my new cord not being long enough) then replaced it with the new hemp cord once over the golf ball, then worked the second length of hemp in, to double it up and tighten. I left the four ends free and on display, as I get real joy from looking at the single fibres or yarns as compared to the finished product, knowing that I had put it all together.

I love that contrast. I really do recommend trying the cord-making if you haven't already. It's a really good feeling making your own, even if it isn't quite as hard-laid as cord made professionally on proper equipment.

I highly recommend the tools made by Mikko Snellman, they are truly beautiful.

I spend as much time looking at them as I do using them.



IGKT NAB Meeting Louisville KY

by Patrick Glisson

The International Guild of Knot Tyers – North America Branch had its annual meeting in Louisville Kentucky the weekend of October 26 – 28, 2018. Here is a quick and brief overview of the meeting. A total of 50 members for Canada, France and the UK joined members from 18 states across the US for a weekend of tours, knots, talks and, of course, bourbon.

Louisville Slugger
G Dickey

Activities included a group tour of the Howard Steamboat Museum, side-tours for various members to local distilleries, the Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory and the Frazier Arms Museum among other local sites.
A group even stopped by the General Electric "First Build", an engineering workspace open to the public, and were ask to demonstrate knotting which was then shared on their Facebook page.

Saturday's "formal" meeting included speakers on the history of steamboats on the Ohio River and in Louisville especially, a talk on working on a steamboat given by a retired Captain and an overview of some of the science in modern synthetic ropes. Between speakers, knots were taught and demonstrated and displays were shared.

12-strand splice *P Glisson*

Loren Damewood taught a class on making Turks Head rings using silver wire. To the entertainment of the hotel staff his class took over the front lobby. The members inhabited the lobby and meeting room most of the time, when no speakers were presenting, with a variety of projects from tying Turks Head Bracelets to a 12-strand Splice.

TH ring class *P Glisson*

This year a charity event was added. All attendees were asked to donate an item to decorate a Christmas Tree for the Festival of Tree Lights which benefits the local children's hospital; over 40 items were donated.

Christmas Tree *P Glisson*

The evening dinner and raffle were a great success with many people being introduced for the first time to a local favorite dessert, the Bourbon Ball, a candy made with Kentucky Bourbon.

Raffle *P Glisson*

The raffle offered over 60 items. A shout-out to Martin Combs for donating a huge lot of cordage to the raffle! Many jokes were made about our guests from the UK or France trying to carry a 2000 ft spool of ¼ in cotton line onto their plane, but none of them won the cord.

During the dinner the necessary business was addressed such as elections and announcing the location of the next meeting, which is tentatively set for Geneva, New York area in fall 2019 and Denver, Colorado area in fall of 2020.

A young knot tyer *P Glisson*

Sunday while many left for their homes, a group enjoyed the final cruise of the season aboard the Belle of Louisville.

Belle cruise *A Storandt*

Speaking "Pan Chang"

by Europa Chang-Dawson

If you have been following the ABC of the pan chang knot structure, you may be wondering by now why there has been so much fuss about a comparatively straightforward knot. This seems a good point to explore some of the language that gives this knot, even at this elementary stage, its place in Chinese knotting.

Any knot tied in silk needs to be well interlaced to compensate for the slipperiness of the cord. The doubled interlacing of the pan chang knot will hold its shape while the hollow middle makes a convenient closed pocket for secreting a small item. This may even have been a flat pebble, used as a weight to hold a silken robe down on a windy day.

If a blessing or a charm had been written by a priest, the paper could be enclosed in a knot and worn as a talisman. Gradually, over the centuries, the properties of the amulet became associated with the knot itself (which, again, could be blessed by a priest) and the interior hollow was said to carry the good wishes of the giver.

By the eighteenth century, knots were in use for decorative purposes without much reference to the meanings and good wishes they carried. In "The Story of the Stone", a Chinese classic, the pampered grandson asks his grandmother's maid to tie a few knots in several colours so as to provide a complete range for his wardrobe. The maid replies tartly that such an order would take her some years. This suggests there are endless variations (well, how long is a piece of string, after all?) and that within each family there would have been one or two individuals whose particular interest was knotting.

As has been mentioned (in Pan Chang A), the square form of this knot is associated with longevity and, by implication, health. It is always acceptable to wish someone long life and health, so very often this knot would be attached to a present. Also, if a knotted piece was the present, this pan chang form would often be the central point.

Most frequently a knot of longevity was given to each new-born child. In the photo, taken in 1924, my mother is wearing a knotted amulet while her baby sister has a knot of longevity.

The locket form of my mother's amulet will have the symbolism explained at another time, when embellishments to the pan chang structure are demonstrated. This form of locket is often known as a 'life lock', and is still popular in Chinese families today, though it will be a small silver, silver-gilt or gold locket, not one tied with silken cord.

In the south of China, and in many towns of SE Asia with a concentration of Chinese working men, hostels have been set up to provide accommodation for men of the same surname, or from the same part of China, clan-houses, or else for men working in the same or allied trades, guild-houses. These were strictly 'bachelor' quarters, for a married man would leave his wife at home to help his parents. When one of the married men announced that his parents had a new grandson, it used to be the tradition, as recorded by a British journalist in South China in the 1920s, that each member of the guild- or clan-house would give the proud father a length of red silk thread. These threads would be braided into a cord, which would be knotted and completed with twinned tassels, and then hung over the child's bed in token of symbolic adoption. It promised that if the child lost all his family, the members of the guild would support him and help him to learn until he could support himself. Clan-houses were still going strong in Malaca (now Melaka) in 2007 and, I was told, in some other towns in Malaysia.

The custom of the red-thread tassels had been 'modernised' by the 1990s: the red silk threads arrive as two 500m reels of machine-embroidery rayon, and the support-and-adoption has changed to a collection which is used to start a savings account for the child. There may even be the same presents for a girl-child by now!

An extinct custom involving knots of longevity, was using them with specific reference to the emperor.

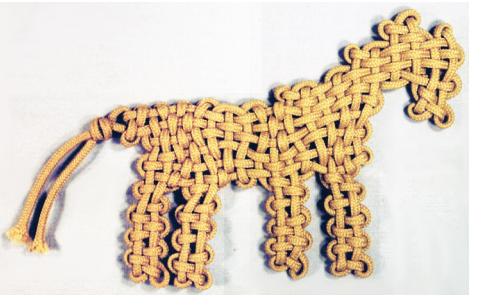
A long reign generally promoted stability in the country, and people would prosper. To make the point, the usual way to address the emperor was "Lord of Ten Thousand Years", and rooms that the emperor frequented would have knots of longevity, usually 5x5 squares, hanging from the beams. There are published photos of the Dowager Empress Cixi standing surrounded by her entourage and strings of longevity knots hung as bunting all along the front of the room to emphasise her status and her subjects' wishes for her good health.

Longevity involves surviving many years so, by association, the square pan chang form may also be used to symbolise a year, or four seasons, or year-upon-year. Just to confuse the unwary, there is also a round form that represents a year!

When presents are exchanged, usually edible, they often come packed in baskets with a knot hanging from the handle. This knot will carry wishes for a good year, and 2x2, 4x4 or 5x5 pan chang knots will almost certainly feature.

Embellished pan chang knots in the form of fish (the word is homophonic with *increase*) or bats and butterflies (each name being homophonic with *blessings*) also appear frequently. There are fish forms and butterfly variations in many books of Chinese knotting, so it is easy to find instructions. A further variation relies upon the similar pronunciation of *upside down* and *arrive*. If a butterfly is tied flying downwards towards a large square pan chang knot, we have the rebus 'May blessings arrive in the coming year'.

There are also the calendar creatures of the Chinese 'zodiac'. Strictly, they are not a set of constellations but a set of animals by which an individual's age may be reckoned. This photo shows a knot for the year of the horse (2002). If it had been tied for a wall hanging, there would also have been some sort of frame tied, and probably some elaborate embellishment, to give importance to the animal.



Progressing on to the simply shaped knots with a pan chang structure, the L-shape is most frequently seen in the stone-chime form. Such chimes used to hang in the outer courtyards of temples, and in front of the magistrates' residences in towns.

An individual needing sanctuary or justice could strike the chime and wait to be escorted to the abbot or the magistrate.

The custom was invoked with discretion, however, because if the individual's motives were shown to be ethically unacceptable, he would suffer the full wrath of the magistrate! Stone-chime forms would have been possible knots for anyone in the civil service, local government or other positions of authority, such as teachers, doctors and priests, because of the associations of wisdom and knowledge.

A variation of the L-shape was the steelyard weight with uneven arms, and another, the carpenter's square which was like a stone-chime with longer arms.

These could have been used to wish an artisan or merchant luck and success, when setting-up in business on their own. In Shanghai and Hong Kong in 1946-51, most of the shops where Grandmama made her purchases, used a scale-pan on one end of a balancing rod with sliding weights, like small versions of a steelyard.

Once embellishments and other knots are added to the basic pan chang knots, the variations are infinite, and the possible meanings numberless. An attempt will be made, at a later date, to explain more of what can be achieved.

BOOK REVIEWS

by Gordon Teenan and David Pepper

The Art of Leather Braiding

Authors Roy & Luo Kelly Tong Search Press Ltd ISBN 978-1-7822163-2-2

The book begins with a description of types of braids, how to start and finish pieces, with a steady progression onto more elaborate items. The authors say they learned by looking at pictures and drawings in the beginning, since their English was very basic. However, the book is well written with extremely clear pictures and illustrations They are so easy to follow that I feel moved to make some of the pieces myself; this coming from someone who has hands like shovels and a predilection for one-inch manila and Stockholm Tar!

While previously being little more than aware of leather braiding, this book came as quite a surprise, not least for the reason that it contains knots that most of us would instantly recognize, yet they have completely different names. Perhaps this is a feature of the braiding world. They carry a hint of a Chinese influence, picturesque names like ‘Desert Moon’ or ‘River Breeze’.

In conclusion, if you ever thought about making coiled or knotted leather jewellery you could do worse than start here, as the authors say, “no special tools needed, materials readily available and lots of durable pieces for men and women”. Buy it for yourself, or as a present for a carefully chosen other, who might then make the pieces for you! GT

The Art of Tying Knots

Ed Paul N Hasluck Endless Mountain Publishing Co. ISBN 978-0-9988527-3-7

It was a masterstroke by the publishers of this facsimile edition to have Des Pawson write the foreword. Not simply because of his notoriety, but because he has very succinctly pointed to the elements which make this volume so valuable.

Of course, the reader will not get the benefit until he has purchased the book, so it behoves this reviewer to quote some of his opinion. In the UK in 1904 it was the most comprehensive book on knots available. Thus it sets in timely context the knotting knowledge of the period. It extends the application of knots beyond the purely maritime, giving what are now unfamiliar names to some familiar knots. While some of the illustrations, particularly in respect of splicing are not very clear, the advice is sound, such as the benefits of practising with better-laid hemp before struggling with splicing cotton rope which too easily loses its lay. With a progression from 'Simple and Useful Knots', through eyes, hitches, bends, ties and lashings, to fancy knots and beyond, though the original is over 100 years old, this facsimile nevertheless deserves a place on a knot tyer's bookshelf: there is, as Pawson puts it "much to discover", not least for the historian. DP

Your Guild Needs You

As a small voluntary organization we rely on the efforts of a small number of people to run the Guild. Having the same person do the same job for too long is not a good idea – everyone loses energy and enthusiasm as they get older. This means that, for the Guild to survive and thrive, we need new people to come forward on a regular basis to fill key positions. Each of the positions can take as much time as you can manage.

The Executive Committee meets for about an hour, four or five times a year via an internet link, usually at 5pm on a Sunday, UK time. This works well for the current members, but new members from elsewhere eg Australia would probably mean changing the time. The Committee is responsible for the everyday running of the Guild: arranging meetings, overseeing publications, responding to calls for help etc. There are also five Guild Trustees who act as a financial backstop (governed by the UK's Charity Commission rules) but the Executive Committee has wide freedom of action. For instance, only individual items of expenditure above £2,000 (€2,280, US$2,600) need the Trustees' formal approval.

Don't be shy in coming forward – everyone involved at the moment was new to the job at some stage. Step up and see if there is something you can do. You will be made very welcome. If you can get to one of the meetings, either one run by a local branch or the larger May and October IGKT meetings, you will be surprised, not only at the variety and quality of the work on show, but also by how friendly they are. The Guild meetings have often been likened to a family get-together.

One key position is Supplies Secretary. For the last six years Terry Barns has filled this role, but he will stand down at the Spring Symposium in May 2019. It is an important job which involves responding to email requests for publications, badges etc, managing postage and invoicing via PayPal. It needs someone well organized with a little spare space for housing the modest stock of supplies. Terry has very much enjoyed interacting with members all over the world and recommends it as an interesting and fulfilling part-time pursuit.

OBITUARIES

Terry Weeks

Terry was born in 1932 in Quetta in what was then, still, India, where his father was serving in the Horse Artillery.

His father interested him in knots and taught him the basics, which he built on over the years. He was a quietly-spoken, gentle, man with a wealth of knowledge which he passed on without any fuss or show.

Terry was a very active person and, after leaving the Royal Marines some time after the Suez Crisis, held a number of jobs and participated in several active hobbies. He was a keen climber, with his brother, and also a caver, scuba diver and a competitive scrambler.

At one time he drove a crane on Weymouth docks, but as he had no fear of heights, became a steel erector, working on many power stations getting the heavy cables into position.

Terry joined the IGKT when he became aware of it in around 1990 and was a tireless ambassador for the Guild, giving away brochures and key fobs whenever he found there was even a glimmer of interest. When, in 1993, he heard that the Tall Ships Race was coming to Weymouth he persuaded the Guild to turn up in force, rather than the smaller shows that individuals had put on beforehand. We had displays at five locations around the town all running simultaneously. This set the scene for more of us to take part in shows and publicise the Guild. The result is that we are now asked to attend events in the town.

In later years, arthritis became a problem, which meant he needed to cut down on some of his activities, though he still knotted with enthusiasm.

His health had been poor for a number of years, and finally he gave in just two days before an event in Weymouth this year where our presence would have pleased him immensely.

Richard Hopkins

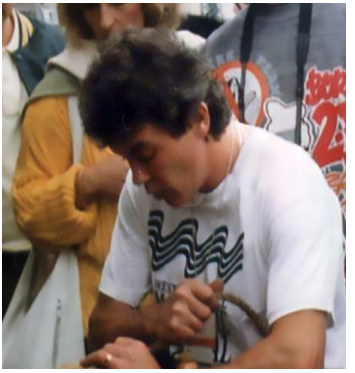
Robert Black

We are sad to report the recent passing of Robert Black on May 22, 2018. Those who knew him, also knew of his skill and talent. His passing marks a great loss to the world of knotting. Robert's interest in decorative knotting and braiding began when he bought his first boat. He became aware of the craft skills of those old sailors who moved west to become cowboys, and their material changed from rope to leather. His production of educational books and videos aimed to keep the crafts alive.

RIP Bob

Patrick Glisson

George Payne



I am sad to report that Cornish member, George Payne, has died, aged 64. He had not been in the best of health for a while. A member of the IGKT from the early days, George and his wife Zoe, ran The Smock Shop, which took up most of his time along with rowing, coxing and racing traditional pilot gigs. He made it to one meeting at Weston Super Mare.

As The Smock Shop they would attend Boat Shows and Maritime Festivals around the UK and abroad. In the summer there is a small Smock Shop down on the quay at St Ives.

At shows and at the shop there would always be a display of George's work and he would be knotting when not serving customers. His specialities included crown sennit bell-ropes and key-fobs that grew in diameter down their length. I was pleased to be able to include his method in my latest book.

Those members of the IGKT who have a Guild ditty bag have a piece of George's work, as it was he who printed our logo on them. We offer our condolences to Zoe, his children and grandchildren. I know there will be a big hole in their lives.

Des Pawson

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All branch details from IGKT website on 25/11/18

back cover: Two cat-o'-nine tails Mac Mackenzie

IGKT SALES	GBP
A New System of Knotting by Harry Asher A new reprint - Harry's creative genius is evident in both his study of knots and his own very useful creations	£7.00
Knotty Potty by 'Jennifer Wren' A final collection of the aphorisms of Geoffrey Budworth	£4.00
Charlie's Knots by Charlie Smith A very personal and easy approach to tying Turks Heads (and other knots) directly in the hand	£3.00
A Practical Approach to Circular Knotworks by Alexander & Christoffer Åström A thorough step-by-step treatment of making circular knots based on Celtic pattern #295	£10.00
A Fresh Approach to Knotting and Ropework by Charles Warner A reprint of this comprehensive and readable work with over 500 clear diagrams	£15.00
A Booklet on Lanyards by Willeke van der Ham A very easy-to-follow introduction to making useful lanyards	£4.00
Design and Make Rope Mats and Rosettes by Nils Kristian Rossing "Recipes" for many circular mats and instructions for using a free downloadable programme to create many others	£10.00
Knotcraft by Stuart Grainger A much-loved book about decorative knotting	£4.00
Turkshead Alternatives by Stuart Grainger Decorative chains and grommets	£3.00
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Decorative Woven Flat Knots (inc CD) by Skip Pennock Lots of terrific shapes	£12.50
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Turksheads the Traditional Way by Eric Franklin A really useful introduction	£3.00
Knotted Novelties by Eric Franklin Reprint of Nylon Novelties	£3.00
Advanced Knotting by Maurice McPartlan An excellent DVD with patterns for complex turksheads	£12.00
Breathing Apparatus Guidelines by Colin Grundy A fascinating story	£4.00
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